

REMARKS

In response to the pending Office Action, Applicants have incorporated claim 7 into claim 1 and further amended claim 1. Support for claim 1 may be found, for example, in Figs. 12 and 13 of the drawings. Claim 7 has been cancelled, without prejudice. Claims 8 and 9 have been amended to show dependency on claim 1. No new matter has been added.

For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are allowable.

Claims 1 and 3-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Yoshimoto et al. (US 2003/0104265); claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshimoto in view of Sugita et al. (USP No. 6,723,463); and claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshimoto in view of Kumata et al. (USP No. 4, 508,793).

The instant application claims priority to JP 2003-104917, which has a filing date of April 9, 2003, and this priority document supports the subject matter set forth in the pending claims. As the effective filing date thereof predates the publication date of Yoshimoto, which is June 5, 2003, it is respectfully submitted that Yoshimoto does not constitute valid prior art to the instant application. A certified English translation of JP 2003-104917 is being filed concurrently with this Amendment in order to perfect the claim of priority. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the § 102 rejection based on Yoshimoto, and the § 103 rejections based on Yoshimoto, Sugita and Kumata must be withdrawn.


Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited.

Application No.: 10/820,160

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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